InspirationsÂ

We created our Scout Programs to serve all of Americaâ€™s youth. Â We developed fully nondiscriminatory, fully inclusive, co-ed Scout Programs with modern, FUN activities which the Scouts choose themselves.Â Â

We have been inspired by real-life stories of youth.Â These stories inspire us everyday to give our best and remind us of just how important our efforts are.Â

Danny (name has been changed) was born with autism.Â He has Aspergerâ€™s Syndrome, meaning he has high-functioning autism

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For youth like Danny, finding friends who realize he can be a good friend can be difficult.Â Youth with autism can find it difficult to follow directions, socialize with others, or understand games and projects. Â There was a time when children with autism disappeared into their own world and into institutions for the rest of their lives.Â But we understand today that autism is a disease which can improve or worsen depending upon many factors.Â

Many autistic children never make friends because they lack the social skills.Â Some play alone, at school and at home, creating their own games with their own rules.Â Even high-functioning youth, often terrified of what they may say or do and thus be ridiculed, keep to themselves and never admit to a desire to belong.Â But desire to belong they do.

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Some children, not knowing if they may shout or react under certain circumstances, feel that other children are scared of them and banish themselves from the things all kids like to do:Â like ball games, sleepovers, and field trips.Â

Behavior and a chance at a normal life can increase dramatically when care is taken with the youth.Â These kids are far too often just treated like a â€œdummyâ€ instead of a person with a disease.Â If the youth gets the chance to start buildings social skills, they can greatly improve.Â Parents of autistic children now have the opportunity to more fully turn to the Scout Movement.Â Youth with autism greatly benefit from activities with a regular schedule, being warned ahead of time when an activity is going to change, and a group of kids all working for the same goal they are.Â The Scout Movement features all of these advantages and our Scout Programs encourage and enable their equal participation.Â

Danny was participating in one of several American Scout Programs or Scout Organizations.Â The Scout entity required his father to participate with him, which he did.Â Danny got the opportunity to make friends and participate as a normal youth.Â The troop held a camping trip which was a requirement for advancing to the next level of their Scout Program.Â When Dannyâ€™s father could not attend, he was barred from going.Â Dannyâ€™s parents offered that his 16-year-old older brother, who has reached a very high level in the Scout Program his brother is a member of, and is not autistic, could attend instead.Â This idea was rejected.Â

Dannyâ€™s parents wrote to leadership to find a way Danny could return to the troop.Â They never received a response.Â

The purpose of the Scout Movement is to help all grow and develop more productive lives.Â The Scout Movement is for all:Â not just kids with high athletic ability, not just those with high grades, not just those

with lots of outdoor skills, not just for perfect people.Â We found it difficult to understand how a movement dedicated to helping individuals improve would reject someone who is trying to improve.Â

At the Scout Programs of Adventure Scouts USA, our philosophy is very simple.Â We make it work.Â We go up, over, under, or around, but we make it work.Â We are not perfect either and we do not say there is a simple solution for Scouts with challenges.Â Sometimes there is not.Â Sometimes changes need to be made, sometimes a Team Counselor or Counselor will need to step up and take responsibility, maybe even take a class on a certain challenge.Â But take them they will.Â Sometimes parents need to be more involved, sometimes extra equipment needs to be sought.Â Clearly, including Scouts with challenges requires effort.Â But everyone is unique and in some way requires effort.Â

But what happens if we do not make that effort?Â Getting the opportunity to be just one of the group for a change, getting the opportunity socialize and make friends means the world to these kids.Â And it can make a real difference between improving and not improving for that child, and can truly affect how they are able to function as an adult.Â And as for the other Scouts?Â We believe one of best gifts we can give all our Scouts is social tolerance.Â They too improve from knowing Scouts with challenges and understanding everyone is not the same.Â Just because we have differences does not mean we cannot be friends.Â Our Scouts get the opportunity to become better people by participating with others who differ from themselves.Â Making the effort to include Scouts like Danny means Danny wins, our other Scouts win, and we as a society win.Â Inclusion is not just a word.Â Danny could anyoneâ€™s child.Â He could be yours.